

Application No. 10/791,386  
Responsive to Office action dated December 29, 2006  
Attorney Docket No. FS-F03230-01

**Amendment to the claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

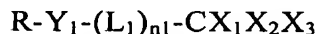
**Listing of claims:**

1. (currently amended) An image forming method for forming an image including a step of imagewise exposure of a photothermographic material and a step of heating the imagewise exposed photothermographic material with an image recording apparatus including laser irradiation means for scan exposing, with a laser beam, a photothermographic material comprising a photosensitive silver halide, a non-photosensitive organic silver salt, a reducing agent and a binder on at least one surface of a support, and means for transporting the photothermographic material in a sub scanning direction and guiding it to a thermal developing portion, wherein:

1) the photothermographic material comprises at least one compound selected from compounds represented by the following formulae (1a), (1b) and (1c); and

2) a distance between a scanning exposure position of the laser irradiation means and an insertion part of the thermal developing portion is 50 cm or less:

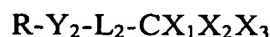
Formula (1a)



wherein,  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$  and  $X_3$  each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent, provided that at least one of  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$  and  $X_3$  is a halogen atom;  $L_1$  represents a sulfonyl group;  $n1$  represents 0 or 1;  $Y_1$  represents  $-N(R_1)-$ , a sulfur atom, an oxygen atom, a selenium atom, or  $-(R_2)C=C(R_3)-$ ;  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$  and  $R_3$  each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent; and  $R$  represents a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an aliphatic group, an aryl group or a heterocyclic group;

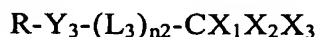
Formula (1b)

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wherein,  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$  and  $X_3$  each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent, provided that at least one of  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$  and  $X_3$  is a halogen atom;  $L_2$  represents a carbonyl group or a sulfinyl group;  $Y_2$  represents  $-N(R_1)-$ , a sulfur atom, an oxygen atom, a selenium atom, or  $-(R_2)C=C(R_3)-$ ;  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$  and  $R_3$  each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent; and  $R$  represents a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an aliphatic group, an aryl group or a heterocyclic group; and

Formula (1c)



wherein,  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$  and  $X_3$  each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent, provided that at least one of  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$  and  $X_3$  is a halogen atom;  $L_3$  represents a sulfonyl group, a carbonyl group or a sulfinyl group;  $n2$  represents 2 or 3;  $Y_3$  represents a single bond,  $-N(R_1)-$ , a sulfur atom, an oxygen atom, a selenium atom, or  $-(R_2)C=C(R_3)-$ ;  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$  and  $R_3$  each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent; and  $R$  represents a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an aliphatic group, an aryl group or a heterocyclic group.

2. (original) An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein  $R$  is an alkyl group.

3. (original) An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein at least one of  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$  and  $X_3$  is Br.

4. (original) An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein  $Y_1$  is  $-N(R_1)-$ .

5. (original) An image forming method according to claim 4, wherein  $R_1$  is an

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alkyl group.

6. (original) An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein  $Y_2$  is -  
 $N(R_1)$ -.

7. (original) An image forming method according to claim 6, wherein  $R_1$  is a  
hydrogen atom.

8. (original) An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein  $Y_3$  is a  
single bond.

9. (original) An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein  $n_2$   
represents 2.

10. (original) An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein R and  
 $R_1$ , or R and  $R_3$  form a ring.

11. (original) An image forming method according to claim 10, wherein the  
ring is an alicyclic group.

12. (original) An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein the  
distance between the scanning exposure position and the insertion part of the thermal  
developing portion is 45 cm or less.

13. (original) An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein the  
photothermographic material has a silver coating amount of 1.9 g or less per  $1\text{ m}^2$  of the  
photothermographic material.

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14. (original) An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein thermal development is carried out for 6 seconds to 14 seconds.

15. (cancelled)

16. (cancelled)

17. (cancelled)

18. (cancelled)

19. (cancelled)

20. (cancelled)

21. (cancelled)

22. (cancelled)

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27. (cancelled)

28. (cancelled)

29. (cancelled)

30. (cancelled)

31. (cancelled)

32. (cancelled)

33. (cancelled)

34. (cancelled)

35. (cancelled)